

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A validation method comprising the steps of:
identifying a host within a first grid of a grid environment currently unassociated with a ghost agent, wherein said host is a software object operating in the first grid, and wherein said grid environment comprises at least two distinct grids;
associating a ghost agent in the first grid with said host, wherein the ghost agent is a software object configured to replicate actions of an associated host software object and record data related to the replicated; ~~replicating~~ actions of ~~[[said]]~~ the associated host software object within said ghost agent;
comparing the recorded data related to said replicated actions with validation data;
generating a validation output based upon said comparing step;
moving said host from a the first grid to a second grid within said grid environment; and,
in response to moving said host to said second grid, moving said associated ghost agent from said first grid to said second grid within said grid environment so as to follow movements of said host within the grid environment and to permit the ghost agent to replicate actions of said host in said second grid and record data related to said replicated actions in said second grid.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
inputting at least one performance specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said performance specification; and,

determining at least one performance metric for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said performance metric with said performance specification.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

inputting at least one resource utilization specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said resource utilization specification; and,

determining at least one resource utilization metric for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said resource utilization metric with said resource utilization specification.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

inputting at least one load specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said load specification; and,

determining at least one load metric resulting from the execution of at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said load metric with said load specification.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

executing a test routine;

generating test output for said test routine, wherein said validation data comprises said test output; and,

determining output for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said replicated action output with said test output.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

inputting said test routine into said ghost agent; and,
executing said test routine within said ghost agent.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
identifying a location for recording validation output that is external to said ghost agent; and,
conveying said validation output to said identified location.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a validation command from a source external to said host and external to said ghost agent; and,
performing at least one operation with said ghost agent responsive to said validation command.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
selecting a plurality of hosts; and,
for each selected host, repeating said associating step, said replicating step, said comparing step, and said generating step.

11. (Currently Amended) A system for validating data comprising:
a plurality of hosts, wherein said hosts are software objects distributed within a plurality of computing platforms within a grid environment comprising at least two distinct grids;

at least one or more ghost agents, wherein each ghost agent is associated with one of said hosts in a same grid as said ghost agent, wherein [[said]] each ghost agent is further configured to replicate actions of the associated host and record data related to the replicated actions, wherein each ghost agent is further configured to compare validation data with data relating to said associated host, and wherein said at least one each ghost agent is further configured to move[[s]] from a first grid to a second grid in response to [[an]] the associated host moving from said first grid to said second grid so as to follow movements of said host within the grid environment and to permit the ghost agent to replicate actions of said host in said second grid and record data related to said replicated actions in said second grid; and,

a validation application configured to manage validation operations performed by said ghost agents.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of said hosts move from one grid within said grid environment to another grid, and wherein said ghost agents responsively move from grid to grid in accordance with movement of said associated host.

13. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a validation interface configured to permit authorized users of said validation application to access features of said validation application.

14. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a test application configured to manage test operations performed by said ghost agents.

15. (Original) The system of claim 11, further comprising:
a validation data store configured to record validation output generated by said ghost agents.
16. (Currently Amended) A ghost agent comprising:
an interface for associating said ghost agent with a host in a same grid as said ghost agent;
a validator configured to compare validation data with data relating to said host;
and,
a ghost controller for managing interactions between said ghost agent and a grid environment comprising at least two distinct grids,
wherein each distinct grid comprises at least one computing platform,
wherein said ghost agent replicates actions of the associated host and records data related to the replicated action, and wherein said ghost agent automatically moves from a first grid to a second grid within said grid environment in response to said associated host moving from said first grid to said second grid so as to follow movements of said associated host within said grid environment to permit the ghost agent to replicate actions of said host in said second grid and record data related to said replicated actions in said second grid.
17. (Original) The ghost agent of claim 16, further comprising:
a ghost identifier configured to identify said ghost agent to components within said grid environment.
18. (Original) The ghost agent of claim 16, further comprising:
a ghost log configured to record validation output.

19. (Original) The ghost agent of claim 16, further comprising:
a test engine configured to manage test routines.
20. (Original) The ghost agent of claim 16, further comprising:
means for disassociating said ghost agent from said host; and,
means for associating said ghost agent with a different host.
21. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a computer for causing the computer to perform the steps of:
identifying a host within a first grid of a grid environment currently unassociated with a ghost agent, wherein said host is a software object operating in the first grid, and wherein said grid environment comprises at least two distinct grids;
associating a ghost agent in the first grid with said host, wherein the ghost agent is a software object configured to replicate actions of an associated host software object and record data related to the replicated; ~~replicating~~ actions of ~~[[said]]~~ the associated host software object within said ghost agent;
comparing the recorded data related to said replicated actions with validation data;
generating a validation output based upon said comparing step;
moving said host from a the first grid to a second grid within said grid environment; and,
in response to moving said host to said second grid, moving said associated ghost agent from said first grid to said second grid within said grid environment so as to follow movements of said host within the grid environment and to permit the ghost agent to

replicate actions of said host in said second grid and record data related to said replicated actions in said second grid.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

inputting at least one performance specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said performance specification; and,

determining at least one performance metric for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said performance metric with said performance specification.

23. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

inputting at least one resource utilization specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said resource utilization specification; and,

determining at least one resource utilization metric for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said resource utilization metric with said resource utilization specification.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

inputting at least one load specification into said ghost agent, wherein said validation data comprises said load specification; and,

determining at least one load metric resulting from the execution of at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said load metric with said

load specification.

25. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

executing a test routine;

generating test output for said test routine, wherein said validation data comprises said test output; and,

determining output for at least one of said replicated actions, wherein said comparing step compares said replicated action output with said test output.

26. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 25, further comprising the steps of:

inputting said test routine into said ghost agent; and,

executing said test routine within said ghost agent.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

moving said host within said grid environment; and,

responsively moving said ghost agent in accordance with movement of said host.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

identifying a location for recording validation output that is external to said ghost agent; and,

conveying said validation output to said identified location.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a validation command from a source external to said host and external to said ghost agent; and,

performing at least one operation with said ghost agent responsive to said validation command.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

selecting a plurality of hosts; and,

for each selected host, repeating said associating step, said replicating step, said comparing step, and said generating step.

31. (Currently Amended) A system for validating data comprising:

~~a host within a grid environment, wherein said host is a software object, and wherein said grid environment comprises at least two distinct grids; means for associating a ghost agent with said host; means for replicating actions of said host within said ghost agent; means for comparing data related to said replicated actions with validation data; means for generating validation output based upon said comparing step; means for moving said host from a first grid to a second grid within said grid environment; and, means for moving said ghost agent from said first grid to said second grid within said grid environment in response to movements of said host.~~

means for identifying a host within a first grid of a grid environment currently unassociated with a ghost agent, wherein said host is a software object operating in the first grid, and wherein said grid environment comprises at least two distinct grids;

means for associating a ghost agent in the first grid with said host, wherein the ghost agent is a software object configured to replicate actions of an associated host software object and record data related to the replicated the actions of the associated host software object;

means for comparing the recorded data related to said replicated actions with validation data;

means for generating a validation output based upon said comparing step;

means for moving said host from the first grid to a second grid within said grid environment; and,

means for, in response to moving said host to said second grid, moving said associated ghost agent from said first grid to said second grid within said grid environment so as to follow movements of said host within the grid environment and to permit the ghost agent to replicate actions of said host in said second grid and record data related to said replicated actions in said second grid.